

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

May 16, 2012
MAG Office, Saguaro Room
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Mayor W. J. "Jim" Lane, Scottsdale, Chair	# Mark Killian, The Killian Company/Sunny
Mayor Jackie Meck, Buckeye, Vice Chair	Mesa, Inc.
# F. Rockne Arnett, Citizens Transportation	Phil Matthews, Salt River Pima-Maricopa
Oversight Committee	Indian Community
* Ron Barnes, Total Transit	* Garrett Newland, Macerich
# Mayor Bob Barrett, Peoria	# Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers, Avondale
* Dave Berry, Swift Transportation	Mayor Georgia Lord, Goodyear
Jed Billings, FNF Construction	* Mayor Elaine Scruggs, Glendale
Councilmember Ben Cooper, Gilbert	Councilmember Jack Sellers, Chandler
Councilmember Shana Ellis, Tempe	Mayor Scott Smith, Mesa
# Councilmember Dick Esser, Cave Creek	* Mayor Greg Stanton, Phoenix
* Victor Flores, State Transportation Board	Karrin Kunasek Taylor, DMB Properties
	Supervisor Max W. Wilson, Maricopa County
	Mayor Sharon Wolcott, Surprise

* Not present
Participated by telephone conference call
+ Participated by videoconference call

1. Call to Order

The meeting of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) was called to order by Chair W. J. "Jim" Lane at 4:02 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Roc Arnett, Mayor Bob Barrett, Councilmember Dick Esser, Mark Killian, and Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers participated in the meeting by telephone.

Chair Lane announced that on May 9, 2012, the MAG Management Committee recommended approval of TPC agenda items 4B, 4C, 5 and 6.

Chair Lane requested that members of the public fill out blue cards for Call to the Audience and yellow cards for consent or action items on the agenda, and then turn in the cards to staff, who will bring them to him. He stated that parking garage validation and transit tickets for those who used transit to attend the meeting were available from staff.

3. Call to the Audience

Chair Lane stated that an opportunity is provided to the public to address the Transportation Policy Committee on items that are not on the agenda that are within the jurisdiction of MAG, or non action agenda items that are on the agenda for discussion or information only. Citizens will be requested not to exceed a three minute time period for their comments. A total of 15 minutes will be provided for the Call to the Audience agenda item, unless the Transportation Policy Committee requests an exception to this limit. Those wishing to comment on agenda items posted for action will be provided the opportunity at the time the item is heard.

No requests for public comment were received.

4. Approval of Consent Agenda

Chair Lane stated that agenda items #4A, #4B, and #4C were on the consent agenda. He stated that public comment is provided for consent items, and noted that no public comment cards had been received. Chair Lane asked members if they would like to remove any of the consent agenda items or have a presentation. No requests were noted.

Supervisor Wilson moved to recommend approval of agenda items #4A, #4B, and #4C on the consent agenda. Vice Chair Meck seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

4A. Approval of the April 18, 2012, Meeting Minutes

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, approved the April 18, 2012, meeting minutes.

4B. Arterial Life Cycle Program Fiscal Year 2012 Regional Area Road Fund Closeout

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, recommended approval of the Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) project reimbursements for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 ALCP Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) Closeout, and amend the FY 2012 Arterial Life Cycle Program, the 2011-2015 Transportation Improvement Program, and Regional Transportation Plan 2010 Update, as necessary and to allocate any unused RARF Closeout funds to the next project(s) on the list if one or more of the recommended projects fail to meet all ALCP Project Requirements by the established deadlines. The Regional Area Road Fund (RARF) Closeout Process was established in Section 260 of the Arterial Life Cycle Program (ALCP) Policies and Procedures approved by the MAG Regional Council. A financial analysis of ALCP revenues and expenditures as well as the ALCP bonding program was conducted. On April 26, 2012, the MAG Transportation Review

Committee recommended approval of ALCP project reimbursements. On May 9, 2012, the MAG Management Committee recommended approval.

4C. Project Changes - Amendment and Administrative Modification to the FY 2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Policy Committee, by consent, recommended approval of amendments and administrative modifications to the FY 2011-2015 MAG Transportation Improvement Program, FY 2012 Arterial Life Cycle Program, and as appropriate, to the Regional Transportation Plan 2010 Update. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2010 Update were approved by the MAG Regional Council on July 28, 2010, and have been modified fourteen times, with the latest approval on April 25, 2012. Since then, there is a need to modify projects in the programs. The requested project changes include transit projects related to the FY2012 CMAQ Closeout, freeway, highway safety, light rail, roadway, transportation enhancements, transit, and work program projects. The changes included may be categorized as exempt from conformity determinations, and administrative modifications do not require a conformity determination. On April 26, 2012, the MAG Transportation Review Committee recommended approval of the requested changes. On May 9, 2012, the MAG Management Committee recommended approval of the requested changes.

5. Regional Freeway and Highway Life Cycle Program - 2012 Rebalancing

Bob Hazlett, MAG Senior Engineer, reported on a new effort to balance the Regional Freeway and Highway Program Life Cycle Program, which is facing a deficit of approximately \$390 million. Mr. Hazlett noted that a report on the 2012 rebalancing had been presented to the MAG Transportation Review Committee, the MAG Management Committee, the Transportation Policy Committee, and MAG Regional Council. He advised that this item is being presented this month for action by the committees. He noted that the Transportation Review Committee recommended approval of Scenario 10b on April 26, 2012, and on May 9, 2012, the Management Committee recommended approval of Scenario 10b with ADOT abstaining from the vote.

Mr. Hazlett displayed a map of projects under construction on the Regional Freeway Program, which included Loop 303, from Interstate 10 to US-60 and US-60 reconstruction from 83rd Avenue to 19th Avenue. He first gave an update on construction on Loop 303 which was requested by Supervisor Wilson last month. Mr. Hazlett stated that the bid opening for the segment from Camelback to Peoria is anticipated this summer, and will include the interim connection for Northern Parkway. He pointed out photographs of the system interchange being constructed in Goodyear at McDowell Road and Cotton Lane and the retaining walls for the flyover on Cactus Road.

Mr. Hazlett stated that Greenway Road will pass over Loop 303 and he pointed out the temporary embankments built by the contractor that facilitate easier transport of construction materials. He showed a picture of the single point diamond interchange structure at Bell Road that was built as part of the Statewide Transportation Acceleration Needs funding and stated that ADOT is now

digging underneath for Loop 303. Mr. Hazlett noted that going north from this is the mainline between Mountainview and Clearview in Sun City West. He stated that completion of construction is anticipated for 2015, but the project is moving faster than planned and significant portions of the corridor might be complete by 2014.

Mr. Hazlett displayed a projected timeline for the Program's cash flow and he noted that an analysis showed a program deficit of approximately \$390 million. He pointed out that the most severe negative balances occur in 2015, 2016, and 2017 where ADOT's bonding capacity has been impacted by lower gas tax and sales tax revenue estimates. Mr. Hazlett noted that due to the lower bonding capacity of approximately \$1 billion, the Loop 202/South Mountain project and the Interstate 10/Maricopa Freeway project between 32nd Street and Baseline Road cannot be constructed simultaneously and must be done sequentially.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the following principles for balancing the program were considered: 1). Do not change timing for immediate construction projects (those underway) on Loop 303 and US-60/Grand Avenue; 2). Look at cash-flow, costs, and timelines for major program items; 3). Programs on US-60/Grand Avenue and HOV lanes on SR-202L/Red Mountain-Santan Freeways leave unaffected; 4). Twelve scenarios considered, and four were presented at the last TPC meeting, as best case for balancing and meeting cash-flow projections. Mr. Hazlett noted that there were significant cost savings on SR-24, from Loop 202 to Ellsworth Road, and possibly there will be savings on Loop 303. He added that MAG staff works with ADOT to reevaluate designs to see if there could be any cost savings.

Mr. Hazlett summarized major items in Scenario 8: to defer the general purpose lanes Loop 101, I-17 to Loop 202, Loop 202, Loop 101 to Gilbert Road, and Loop 101, US-60 to Loop 202. Mr. Hazlett stated that general purpose lanes projects represent a cost of approximately \$390 million, the amount of the program deficit. He explained that a cost/benefit analysis found that not adding general purpose lanes to those three corridors would be a disbenefit to the region. He further explained that the cost/benefit analysis was negative, which is highly unusual. Mr. Hazlett noted that Scenario 8 also includes adding lanes on Loop 303 and I-17, the new South Mountain Freeway and adding lanes on I-10 at the Broadway curve.

Mr. Hazlett stated that Scenario 10a looked at reducing the Loop 303 project between US-60 and I-17 by \$80 million and reducing the I-17 project by \$300 million. He noted that the reason for considering a reduction to the Loop 303 is the favorable bids they have received. Mr. Hazlett stated that ADOT is conservative in the funds set aside for right-of-way and has been returning to the program a fair amount of these funds they did not need. He added that this could be the case with Loop 303.

Mr. Hazlett then noted that approximately \$1.1 billion is allocated to the I-17 corridor, but no specific project has been identified yet. He stated that the environmental impact study is underway by ADOT for I-17 and it appears that improvements could total more than \$2.5 billion, above the \$1.1 billion identified in the RTP. Mr. Hazlett noted that this corridor could be a candidate for a managed lanes Public Private Partnership (P3), and he added that he would bring information from

the MAG Managed Lanes Study forward at a future TPC meeting. Mr. Hazlett stated that Scenario 10a retains adding lanes on Loop 101, the add lanes projects on Interstate 10 between 40th Street and Loop 202/Santan Freeway, and the new South Mountain Freeway corridor.

Mayor Wolcott asked the number of lanes at the full buildout of Loop 303 and Interstate 17. Mr. Hazlett replied that full buildout would include six lanes – three in each direction. He said that Interstate 17 varies; what has been identified is adding two general purpose lanes to the current configuration of three general purpose, one HOV lane in each direction. Mr. Hazlett stated that ADOT is looking at whether two lanes in each direction between the split and Loop 101 are needed, and he added that this is through a fairly well developed area of the Valley and that is the reason the cost is approaching \$2.5 billion.

Mr. Hazlett then described Scenario 10b, which includes deferring the fifth and sixth lanes on Loop 303 from US-60 to I-17, identified in Scenario 10a and returning the Loop 303 project in 10b near the Goodyear area to the program. Mr. Hazlett noted that the current facility between US-60 and I-17 is a four lane divided roadway, two lanes in each direction, with posted speeds of 65 m.p.h., and accommodates travel demand well.

Mr. Hazlett pointed out that the area of the Loop 303 project in 10b is ripe for economic development of warehousing and distribution industries in the Goodyear area. He noted that this segment had been deferred in the 2009 rebalancing to the fifth phase of the RTP, which is outside the Proposition 400 funding. Mr. Hazlett stated that a number of companies have contacted the City of Goodyear and returning this segment of Loop 303 from I-10 to MC-85 to the program could facilitate those economic development activities. He noted that the costs for either of the Loop 303 projects are virtually the same. Mr. Hazlett stated that a cost/benefit analysis found that every dollar spent on the Loop 303, Interstate 10 to MC-85 project would return approximately \$5.75 in benefits, and would include about five additional miles than the Loop 303 northern segment. Mr. Hazlett noted concerns for transferring traffic to Loop 101 and he stated that it does transfer some traffic but is not near capacity and holds through the 2030 time horizon.

Mr. Anderson noted that the Loop 303 segment designated in blue, red, and gold on the map he displayed was part of the original Proposition 300 in 1985. He noted that the interchange on Loop 303 and Interstate 10 currently is under construction and money could be saved if the south segment of Loop 303 is built now. Mr. Anderson stated that there are a number of advantages for constructing the south part first as long as the north part can handle the traffic volume over 15 to 20 years.

Mayor Barrett mentioned that people might not be aware of a couple of points. He said that he would support the recommendation, but wanted to note that Peoria is giving up its place in line. Mayor Barrett stated that MC-85 was in Phase Three of the original Regional Transportation Plan, then in the 2009 rebalancing, it was deferred to Phase Five. Mayor Barrett stated that their project was in Phases One and Two of the original Regional Transportation Plan, but deferred to Phase Three in the 2009 Rebalancing and is now proposed to be deferred to Phase Five, which may never be funded. He said that the information missing here is that Peoria may have a major resort with

a golf course and ancillary development in that area that is under negotiation by the County. Mayor Barrett stated that this resort will make Lake Pleasant an even bigger attraction that it is currently, and 600,000 to 700,000 visitors annually are projected. Mayor Barrett commented that he did not think this information was included the MAG model. He stated that he would support Scenario 10b because he understood the economic development benefits, but he was concerned that the delay of the northern portion of Loop 303 could adversely affect economic development for that part of the region. Mayor Barrett asked that if additional funding is received from such things as bid savings that it be applied to restoring the additional lanes.

Chair Lane asked Mr. Anderson if this could be incorporated into the motion.

Mr. Anderson replied that he did not think the potential resort would change the traffic projections because they had been done a few years ago, but they could offset some of the loss of economic activity that was originally projected. He noted that Mayor Barrett was correct – that the program was experiencing lower right of way costs and construction bids, which might be an opportunity to bring this segment of Loop 303 back into the program. Mr. Anderson added that this could be a part of a recommendation.

Mayor Barrett acknowledged that this is assuming the resort comes through, however, they felt pretty confident, and that is why he asked restoring this be kept in mind if funding becomes available.

Chair Lane asked if he would like to make the motion to include this language.

Mayor Barrett moved to recommend approval of 2012 Rebalancing Scenario 10B, where the MAG Regional Freeway and Highway Program meets the projected \$390 million shortfall by repositioning the SR-202L/South Mountain Freeway and Interstate 10/Maricopa Freeway projects to improve the Program's cash flow; transfer funding from the SR-303L segment between US-60 and Interstate 17 to the SR-303L segment between Interstate 10 and MC-85, but retain funding for a grade separated interchange at the existing El Mirage Road intersection; remove \$300 million from the Program's budget for the Interstate 17/Black Canyon Freeway corridor; to encourage ADOT to focus upon cost-effective solutions that will provide opportunities to return projects to the Program in the future; return the segment of Loop 303 from US-60/Grand Avenue to Interstate 17 into the Program if funding from other sources, such as right-of-way construction/bid savings from the current Loop 303 construction between I-10 and US-60; and incorporate the revised program in the next update of the MAG Transportation Improvement Program and the Regional Transportation Plan. Supervisor Wilson seconded the motion.

Mayor Meck asked if the motion changed the cost/benefit ratio at all. Mr. Hazlett replied the cost/benefit analysis assumed it was a four-lane section, not a six-lane section. He also pointed out that the El Mirage Road traffic interchange is the only at-grade intersection left on Loop 303, and the program does include converting that to a traffic interchange, so there would be an uninterrupted flow of traffic from Interstate 10 to Interstate 17.

Chair Lane noted that there was a motion and a second on the table and asked Mr. Hazlett if he had more to present. Mr. Hazlett stated that the only part to describe was Scenario 12, which included swapping priorities between Interstate 10 and the South Mountain Freeway. He noted that Scenario 10b keeps South Mountain as the first priority, and this is consistent with regional priorities. Mr. Hazlett noted that both projects cannot be done at the same time due to lower bonding capacity. In addition, with the Southeast Valley Major Investment Study, they think there are other alternatives on Interstate 10 that ADOT should consider.

Mayor Smith asked if the alternative opportunities for Interstate 10 would delay any schedules or change anything. Mr. Hazlett replied that a start date of 2022 was originally identified, but ADOT reexamined the cash flow and found it could be brought forward three years sooner, about seven years from now.

Mayor Smith stated that there are things not included, especially those relative to central Phoenix: the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 area. He noted that there are huge issues and bottlenecks in that area not addressed by the scenarios. Mayor Smith remarked that sometimes coming in to Phoenix from Mesa at 3:30 p.m. the freeway stops at 32nd Street and the backup extends through the tunnel to the stack. He asked if this scenario addressed Interstate 10/Maricopa Freeway issues and at what point are those problems addressed.

Mr. Hazlett replied that some of the issues mentioned by Mayor Smith are addressed in the Southeast Valley MIS and its recommendations will be brought to the TPC in the near future. He stated that one of the recommendations is to not look at Interstate 10 only but extending it onto I-17 around the Durango curve to the Stack, which is a more natural corridor than through the I-10 tunnel. Mr. Hazlett stated that this is a fairly wide open stretch of freeway and it might make more sense to go from the Stack to the Split to the Pecos Stack. He added that MAG is working on this with ADOT and FHWA.

Mr. Anderson stated that funding available for Interstate 10 and Interstate 17 totals approximately \$1.3 to \$1.4 billion and they want to ensure that the expenditures are the most effective use of funding in terms of congestion relief. He said they have backed up a bit to see if there could be better options in those two corridors, and he added that managed lanes P3 opportunities could be an option to provide additional funding. Mr. Anderson then commented on the Ministack where Loop 202 comes in to Interstate 10. He said they had preliminary discussions with ADOT about the open median, which had been reserved for transit use, but might be able to be used for highway use. Mr. Anderson stated that staff had discussions with ADOT about whether there are lower cost alternatives where Loop 202 and SR-51 come in to Interstate 10 to free up the bottleneck.

Mayor Smith asked if the problem with the tunnel is that there is no extra real estate for expansion. Mr. Anderson noted that the tunnel is really not the constraint in this area, there two issues in this section of Interstate 10: massive merging and weaving from traffic entering Interstate 10 from Loop 202 and SR-51, and at the Stack where traffic is entering from 7th Avenue and exiting to 19th Avenue and Interstate 17. Mr. Anderson stated that they are looking at ways to fix the configuration to reduce the weaving movement.

Mayor Smith stated that when he approaches the Interstate 10/Interstate 17 Split and even though he has been driving it for 20-plus years, it still does not seem to have a natural flow.

Mr. Hazlett used as an example how weaving to and from the HOV lanes is also a major problem on Interstate 10, especially west of Interstate 17 at the Stack. He noted that Interstate 10 traffic is congested at this point and then opens up west of 43rd Avenue about two miles from the Stack. Mr. Hazlett stated that some of the advanced traffic management techniques are bringing back reliability to the system.

Mayor Smith stated that he understands the history of Proposition 300 and Proposition 400, but also understands reality and that sometimes some of the best plans do not work out. Mayor Smith expressed that he hoped we would not be so stuck on a plan that solutions are ignored. He stated that deviating slightly from a plan developed 30 years ago might be necessary due to limited resources .

Supervisor Wilson stated that there are many accidents in the tunnel and he would like to know if anything had been done to make it safer. Mr. Hazlett stated that staff would look at the crash rates in the tunnel.

With no further discussion, the vote on the motion passed unanimously.

6. US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization and Access Management Plan Study (COMPASS)

Mr. Hazlett reported on the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization and Access Management Plan Study, or COMPASS. He stated that this study is a unique effort for the Valley. Mr. Hazlett stated that the project was added to the MAG work program in September 2011 and Burgess and Niple, Inc., was selected as the consultant.

Mr. Hazlett stated that US-60/Grand Avenue is an historic corridor, being designated US-60 in about 1910. Mr. Hazlett noted that it was the primary route from the Valley to Los Angeles until Interstate 10 opened in 1985. He pointed out on a map of recently completed construction that Grand Avenue was widened to six lanes from 83rd Avenue to Loop 303. Mr. Hazlett noted that Grand Avenue now has a uniform speed limit of 45 m.p.h. and Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) recently did a major traffic signal re-timing. He said that projects under construction include intersection improvements at Bell Road, 103rd Avenue, and Thunderbird Road, and reconstruction between 83rd Avenue and 19th Avenue that includes access management and pavement rehabilitation.

Mr. Hazlett noted that ADOT expressed concern that the facility was not longer a regional facility and discussed turning the facility to local control. He stated that Mayor Mook, Mayor Scruggs, Mayor Barrett, Mayor Stanton, Mayor LeVault, and Supervisor Wilson sent a letter to ADOT Director John Halikowski to express their interest in preserving US-60/Grand Avenue from 19th Avenue and McDowell Road to SR-303L as an expressway facility that remains a state highway under ADOT control. Their letter also expressed a desire to work through MAG in cooperation

with ADOT to enhance mobility in the corridor and maintain the corridor's expressway character. Based upon this request, MAG is developing the US-60/Grand Avenue Corridor Optimization and Access Management Plan Study to identify a long-term solution for accommodating travel demand and adjacent property access in this corridor.

Mr. Hazlett stated that a project charter was developed to create an overall vision, cooperatively define the corridor's operational character, establish an access management system, and develop guidelines for signage, landscaping, and aesthetic treatments. Mr. Hazlett noted that the project partners signed the charter agreement on February 22, 2012. He displayed a photograph of the signers and noted that a copy of the signed charter was included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Hazlett displayed a map of the study area and described the corridor limits as extending from Loop 303 in the northwest Valley to Willetta Street in central Phoenix. He said that the study will look at unique opportunities for this corridor. Mr. Hazlett stated that there are ten primary project tasks developed by the partnering agencies. He noted that one of the bigger tasks is to look at economic development that could enhance the corridor.

Mr. Hazlett stated that access management is very important on the Grand Avenue corridor and he would be making a presentation on this at a future meeting. Mr. Hazlett displayed a list of jurisdictions outside of this region with similar regional corridors that have been studied.

Mr. Hazlett stated that the study process is anticipated to take 18 months, during which time staff and the consultants will meet with the elected officials who signed the charter to have their guidance. He noted that the process will include a project planning team of partner agency technical staff, and a study review team of key stakeholders.

Mr. Hazlett then reviewed some of the possible solutions. He said that the intersection at Bell Road is one of the highest traffic volume intersections in the Valley with approximately 110,000 cars per day. Mr. Hazlett stated that ADOT is looking at ways to grade separate the intersection and provide better access. He explained that through the MAG on-call contract, Burgess and Niple came up with a clever design to move the ramps to the median and Grand Avenue passing underneath. Mr. Hazlett noted how driveways to adjacent commercial centers still have access to Grand Avenue. He said they are also working with City of Surprise staff to allow driveway access from back roads. Mr. Hazlett stated that staff also met with the City of El Mirage. One of the conditions they discussed was the frontage road along inbound Grand Avenue and the proposal to turn it into a one-way road.

Chair Lane thanked Mr. Hazlett for his report and asked if there were questions.

Mr. Smith stated that US-60/Grand Avenue is historically a state route that will remain a state route that is being merged into a more urban fabric. He stated that signage is important to establishing a different character to the corridor. Mr. Smith stated that ADOT controls the signage on Grand Avenue, and if the study is going to be effective, rules need to be defined to make the signage more

urban. That is why the elected officials need to be involved in the process, otherwise, Grand Avenue will look like it does today, a state highway.

Chair Lane asked if the signage was part of the overall program. Mr. Smith replied that was correct.

Supervisor Wilson asked about the timing of traffic signals. Mr. Hazlett noted that ADOT is looking at the signal phases and that is where traffic access and signal optimization come in.

Chair Lane commented that another issue on Grand Avenue is the railroad crossings, which add another element into traffic signal timing. Mr. Hazlett replied that they will reach out to BNSF through this study and get a solution that is good for the Valley and the railroad.

7. MAG-BNSF Railway - Grand Avenue Commuter Rail Corridor Cost Analysis Update

Marc Pearsall, MAG Transit Planner, provided an update on the MAG-BNSF Railway - Grand Avenue Commuter Rail Corridor Cost Analysis Update. He stated that as of 2010, MAG had completed three commuter rail studies, the MAG Commuter Rail System Study, the Yuma West Commuter Rail Study, and the MAG Grand Avenue Commuter Rail Study. He noted that they form a commuter rail system of 110 miles with a projected ridership of 18,000 per day.

Mr. Pearsall stated that BNSF has an active commuter rail system, and its Vice President, D.J. Mitchell, has operated three passenger rail systems in the United States: in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Seattle, and he contacted MAG to offer a possible solution to do an analysis of work previously done.

Mr. Pearsall provided the history of passenger rail along Grand Avenue, which opened in 1895 by the Santa Fe, Prescott & Phoenix Railway. He stated that the final Santa Fe passenger train via the Grand Avenue corridor was April 30, 1969. Mr. Pearsall stated that the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe merged in September 1995, creating BNSF Railway.

Mr. Pearsall noted that the MAG Regional Council took action to accept the three studies that include the possibility of commuter rail. He displayed maps of potential commuter rail corridors and stations from the studies, and he pointed out startup, midline, and Chicago-style commuter rail systems. Mr. Pearsall showed a map of the daily ridership, projected at almost 18,000 in 2030 using the existing bus network that was in the Regional Transportation Plan. He noted that daily ridership on Grand Avenue is projected at almost 3,000, Southeast at almost 6,500, Tempe at 950, and Yuma West at almost 1,400. Mr. Pearsall stated that this commuter rail system called for sharing right-of-way with BNSF.

Mr. Pearsall stated that next steps include identifying local funding of the system and continued coordination with ADOT and railroads. He noted that ADOT currently is conducting a Tucson to Phoenix Passenger Rail study and has been conducting one-on-one meetings with jurisdictions along the route to get input. Mr. Pearsall stated that the railroad communicated that liability and indemnification statutes need to be identified that could prohibit having passenger train service

through a public/private partnership. He said that ADOT indicated it will take the lead on this effort once its passenger rail study is completed. Mr. Pearsall stated that another step toward implementation is the integration of MAG's Regional Sustainable Transportation and Land Use Integration Study. He stated that once funding is identified, a governance plan would need to be developed and implemented, and railroad agreements, design and construction, and operation usually follow in about four years. Mr. Pearsall stated that the tracks are there, but would need to be upgraded for passenger rail and the railroads need to be held harmless.

Mr. Pearsall stated that BNSF contacted MAG and communicated that it is upgrading its infrastructure along Grand Avenue to serve its freight customers. He displayed a map of new infrastructure being planned by BNSF, and he added that BNSF would like to take MAG's work and embed it into their future plans.

Mr. Pearsall noted that BNSF took findings from MAG's Grand Avenue study two years ago, applied it to their industry, and said they thought the numbers were high. BNSF offered the use of its passenger rail modeling department at no charge to take another look at the Grand Avenue Study, which would take a few months and could be accommodated through the MAG on-call program. He said that there have been changes in signal technologies, trackway, crew management, and vehicle technologies, such as the A-Train used in Denton, Texas, that looks like a light rail train and operates on diesel fuel. Mr. Pearsall stated that BNSF feels this train could operate on their tracks, meet federal guidelines for safety, and cost half as much as conventional commuter rail vehicles. He advised that the crew costs are cut in half because there is one operator instead of two operators and not as much track profile would be needed. Mr. Pearsall explained they utilize positive train control, which is a federally mandated global positioning system to limit crashes, etc.

Mr. Pearsall stated that it is a rare opportunity to have a private sector company offer its services, but is BNSF only, not Union Pacific, which feels it cannot accommodate passenger rail because it feels its tracks are congested and wants to concentrate on its freight business. Mr. Pearsall stated that the new effort with BNSF would not update regional socioeconomic, census or ridership data.

Mr. Pearsall displayed a photo of the A-Train, which currently is in testing. He said that BNSF feels this vehicle could be accommodated on its Grand Avenue tracks. Mr. Pearsall stated that a few vehicles could be connected to accommodate capacity and operate at a lower cost and higher fuel efficiency than a standard diesel engine.

Chair Lane thanked Mr. Pearsall for his report. He said that he had asked for this update to be on the agenda because it seems we are locked in to old technologies. Chair Lane stated that the new effort with BNSF would not update regional socioeconomic, census or ridership data goes with Mayor Smith's earlier comment about whether we are trying to match needs to an existing system. Do the existing tracks address the issue of commuter rail in the region? He asked if other technologies using existing right-of-way, such as Maglev or monorails, had been considered for a commuter service, which could alleviate vehicle traffic if it was overhead, and utilize existing park and ride lots. Chair Lane stated that commuter rail was discussed a couple of years ago and it seems discussion was tied to Amtrak and existing hard rail systems as an answer.

Mr. Anderson stated that a numerous changes to technology are occurring, such as the personal rapid transit pod, and they have been tracking that technology for about ten years. He explained that there is some movement toward production although in very small scale applications. Mr. Anderson stated that the personal rapid transit pod is being used to connect the terminals to parking at Heathrow Airport. He stated that he had spoken to the president of the company that manufactures these pods for NASA that there may be an opportunity in the future as technologies mature. Mr. Anderson stated that these systems are lower cost and more flexible with modules that accommodate four to six people and is almost like a personal vehicle except it is on a fixed guideway system. He stated that a study done for the State of New Jersey on this technology concluded that it is very promising but not ready yet. Mr. Anderson stated that the Federal Railroad Administration is studying multi-state high speed rail and the prime corridor for high speed rail that came out of the study is Phoenix to Los Angeles with top speeds of 186 m.p.h. and average speeds of 145 m.p.h.

Chair Lane stated that Maglev is an application that can operate on a number of different rights of way, has those kinds of speeds, and had the capability to be in a metro area and provide access to points beyond normal commuter traffic. Chair Lane said the question has been raised about the possibility of contacting the airlines, which might be engaged in this technology on ground level. He stated that his concern is fitting our needs to an existing hard rail track. If the study will not be updating the regional socioeconomic, census or ridership data it needs to have some sort of mission.

Mr. Smith stated that national expert Michael Gallis will be at MAG on June 13 to discuss the metro area and its direction. He said that on May 14, Mr. Gallis gave a preview at MAG and one of his points is that we think incrementally and not what we could become. Mr. Smith stated that the new City of Surprise City Manager brought to MAG information on the financing mechanisms used by the Utah Transit Authority not available here. Mr. Smith stated that a development authority could be established for some corridors. He said that he thought some time should be spent looking at development districts and authorities. Mr. Smith added that establishing commuter rail incrementally would take forever.

Chair Lane said that the emphasis he would like to put on it is we have existing right of way and technology to keep commuter/passenger rail off the roadway so lanes of traffic are not eliminated, and at the same time run the same established routes, would be an easy way to save money, and be efficient.

Mr. Anderson stated that new corridors with high speed rail between Phoenix and Los Angeles need to be examined. Rather than improving existing infrastructure, build high speed rail as it is supposed to be built, which would provide that economic linkage between this region and the ninth largest economy in the world.

Chair Lane commented that high speed rail could be commuter rail as well.

Mayor Rogers asked for clarification that BNSF indicated the numbers in the Grand Avenue Study were high. Mr. Pearsall stated that BNSF believes that the industry averages used in the MAG commuter rail study are high because they were three years old in 2009. He said that the BNSF vice president told him there have been changes in the industry that have affected BNSF as a business, such as GPS, signal technologies, vehicles with lower operating costs, and lower crew costs, and because the vehicle and signal technologies have changed, it allows us to not overbuild the infrastructure on Grand Avenue.

8. Request for Future Agenda Items

Topics or issues of interest that the Transportation Policy Committee would like to have considered for discussion at a future meeting were requested.

Mr. Smith noted that he had received a request about the TPC meeting start time. He noted the Regional Council had success with changing its meetings to an 11:30 a.m. start time and he suggested that staff could poll TPC members if they support changing the meeting time. Comments were positive for changing the meeting time, especially if it avoided rush hour.

9. Comments from the Committee

An opportunity was provided for Transportation Policy Committee members to present a brief summary of current events. The Transportation Policy Committee is not allowed to propose, discuss, deliberate or take action at the meeting on any matter in the summary, unless the specific matter is properly noticed for legal action.

No comments were noted.

Adjournment

Mayor Wolcott moved and Mayor Smith seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Chair

Secretary